

End of the line for four Ellerman ships

The end of an era has come for the last four passenger ships of the London-based Ellerman and Bucknall Steamship Company, which operates between London and South Africa.

The ships—City of Port Elizabeth (13,278 tons), City of Exeter (13,253 tons), City of Durban (13,255 tons) and City of York (13,250 tons), were all built during the early 1950s. They are now to be sold.

It was hoped at one time that the vessels might be put on the Liverpool-based Ellerman-Hall Line's South African run from Birkenhead, but this did not materialise.

The masters of all four

served their sea-going apprenticeships with the 100-years-old Hall Line. One of them—Captain G. E. Greenhow, lives at Waverley, Oldfield Way, Heswall.

The ships, built by Vickers-Armstrong at Newcastle-on-Tyne, were all due for survey this year, and the company say they were not prepared to undertake expensive refits.

An Ellerman spokesman said to-day although a variety of reasons could be advanced, the main one must be rises in the cost of bunkering, repairs and crew wages.

The cargo tonnage lost would be made up by other vessels in the fleet.